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The Cartoon Guide to Statistics — Larry Gonick and Woollcott Smith. For those who never quite grasped the meaning of mean, here is a sourcebook of statistical concepts illustrated by the cartoonist who created the ever-popular *Cartoon Guide to Physics*. Gonick and Smith, a statistician, join forces to explain basic concepts in easy-to-understand terminology and amusing yet informative illustrations. HarperPerennial, 1993, 230 p., illus., paperback, \$13.00.

Fuzzy Thinking: The New Science of Fuzzy Logic — Bart Kosko. According to Kosko, Aristotle's black-and-white world is passé and the gray areas of Taoism are the wave of our technological future. Kosko takes an in-depth look at the capabilities we will have once we accept fuzzy logic — the logic that allows machines to think more like humans, in that computers can read human handwriting and air conditioners do not just turn on and off but warm or cool the air just enough to maintain a constant temperature. He also discusses why this theory faces such opposition in the United States while thriving in Japan, and he explores the ethical and philosophical ramifications of fuzzy logic. The book provides compelling reading from a pioneer in the development of fuzzy logic. Hyperion Pr, 1993, 318 p., illus., hardcover, \$24.95.

Tales of the Earth: Paroxysms and Perturbations of the Blue Planet — Charles Officer and Jake Page. A brief history of some of the major geologic cataclysms on Earth and their impact on nature and humanity, detailed with many firsthand accounts. These upheavals include the 1815 eruption of the Indonesian volcano Tambora, which was blamed for a "missed summer" in New England, a food shortage in western Europe, and red and yellow snowfall in normally snowless southern Italy. Other monumental occurrences covered here include earthquakes, floods, meteor showers, and human-caused events such as Chernobyl and the "killer smog" that engulfed London in 1952. Oxford U Pr, 1993, 226 p., b&w illus. & photos, hardcover, \$24.00.

Unbounding the Future: The Nanotechnology Revolution — K. Eric Drexler and Chris Peterson with Gayle Pergamit. Drexler, a specialist in nanotechnology, envisions a world teeming with molecular-scale machines that can manipulate matter on an atomic scale, and he argues that such technology is within our reach. Writing for the lay reader, he and his coauthors describe the current state of nanotechnology and explain how future developments could revolutionize medicine, industry, and technology. They present several scenarios for future applications, emphasizing that these are possibilities rather than predictions. They also emphasize the importance of responsible and educated forethought in nanotechnology development, noting that the promise of inexpensive control of the structure of matter carries with it the potential for abuse. Originally published in hardcover in 1991. Quill, 1993, 304 p., illus., paperback, \$10.00.

Pain is "as elemental as fire or ice. Like love, it belongs to the most basic human experiences that make us who we are." Here is a work that reaches deeply into the experiences of all readers. In *The Culture of Pain*, David Morris combines the most up-to-date medical knowledge with a fascinating exploration of pain's history in Western literature and culture to restore the bridge between pain and meaning. "Pain" and "meaning" rarely occur to us in the same thought. Yet chronic pain, now epidemic, always involves both the mind and the

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The Culture of Pain

DAVID B. MORRIS



emotions. Today's interpretation of pain, dominated by scientific-medical voices, obscures this basic point and accounts for the crucial divide we have reached. The future of pain, David Morris argues, depends on our recognizing other voices. Cultural and personal meanings, when we acknowledge them, carry the experience of hurting significantly beyond its biochemical pathways and give it an identity that can be gendered or political, tragic or comic, even at times useful. The voices captured here, from Homer to Beckett and including Kant's personal remedy for gout, help us recover a longer past and begin to think of a more human future.

—from *University of California Press*

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